CLAIMS

What is Claimed is:

1. A method for controlling access to digital information, comprising:

associating with said digital information a location identity attribute that defines at least a specific geographic location, wherein said digital information can be accessed only at said specific geographic location.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said associating step further comprises generating said location identity attribute to include at least a location value and a proximity value.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein said location value corresponds to a location of an intended recipient appliance of said digital information.

4. The method of Claim 2, further comprising generating said location identity attribute to include a temporal value.

5. The method of Claim 2, wherein said location value further comprises a latitude and longitude dimension.

6. The method of Claim 5, wherein said location value further comprises an altitude dimension.

7. The method of Claim 3, wherein said proximity value corresponds to a zone that encompasses said location.

8. The method of Claim 7, further comprising selecting said zone from a group consisting of a rectangular region, a polygonal region, a circular region, and an elliptical region.

9. The method of Claim 7, further comprising selecting said zone from a known geographic region including at least one of a postal zip code, a state, a city, a county, a telephone area code, and a country.

10. The method of Claim 1, further comprising enforcing said location identity attribute by allowing access to said digital information only at said specific geographic location.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein said enforcing step further comprises identifying location of an appliance through which access to said digital information is sought.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein said enforcing step further comprises comparing said appliance location to said specific geographic location defined by said location identity attribute, and allowing access to said digital information only if said appliance location falls within said specific geographic location.

13. The method of Claim 11, wherein said location identifying step further comprises resolving said appliance location from a street address for said appliance.

14. The method of Claim 11, wherein said location identifying step further comprises retrieving said appliance location from a file stored within said appliance.

15. The method of Claim 11, wherein said location identifying step further comprises recovering said appliance location from a GPS receiver embedded in said appliance.

16. The method of Claim 11, wherein said location identifying step further comprises recovering said appliance location by triangulating RF signals received by said appliance.

17. The method of Claim 1, wherein said associating step further comprises encrypting said digital information using an encryption key based at least in part on said location identity attribute.

18. The method of Claim 17, wherein said generating step further comprises generating an area parameter defining a region that encompasses said specific geographic location, and deterministically combining said area parameter with said location identity attribute to yield said encryption key.

19. The method of Claim 17, further comprising enforcing said location identity attribute by allowing decryption of said digital information only at said specific geographic location.

20. The method of Claim 19, wherein said enforcing step further comprises generating a decryption key based at least in part on said specific geographic location, said decryption key being thereby used to decrypt said digital information.

21. The method of Claim 1, wherein said associating step further comprises integrating said location identity attribute with said digital information.

22. The method of Claim 21, further comprising including said location identity attribute in a portion of a file containing said digital information.

23. The method of Claim 22, further comprising enforcing said location identity attribute by allowing access to said file by a corresponding software application only at said specific geographic location.

24. The method of Claim 1, further comprising enforcing said location identity attribute by allowing retrieval of said digital information from memory only at said specific geographic location.

25. The method of Claim 1, further comprising enforcing said location identity attribute by allowing visual display of said digital information only at said specific geographic location.

26. The method of Claim 1, further comprising storing said digital information and said location identity attribute in a fixed format including at least one of CD-ROM, DVD, diskette, videocassette, and tape.

27. The method of Claim 1, further comprising transmitting said digital information and said location identity attribute in electronic form via at least one of telephone line, video cable, satellite broadcast, fiber optic, and wireless.

28. An apparatus for controlling access to digital information, comprising:

a processor having memory adapted to store software instructions operable to cause said processor to associate with said digital information a location identity attribute that defines at least a specific geographic location, wherein said digital information can be accessed only at said specific geographic location.

29. The apparatus of Claim 28, wherein said location identity attribute further comprises at least a location value and a proximity value.

30. The apparatus of Claim 29, wherein said location value corresponds to a location of an intended recipient appliance of said digital information.

31. The apparatus of Claim 29, wherein said location identity attribute further comprises a temporal value.

32. The apparatus of Claim 29, wherein said location value further comprises a latitude and longitude dimension.

33. The apparatus of Claim 32, wherein said location value further comprises an altitude dimension.

34. The apparatus of Claim 29, wherein said proximity value corresponds to a zone that encompasses said location.

35. The apparatus of Claim 34, wherein said zone further comprises at least one of a rectangular region, a polygonal region, a circular region, and an elliptical region.

36. The apparatus of Claim 34, wherein said zone further comprises a known geographic region including one of a postal zip code, a state, a city, a county, a telephone area code, and a country.

37. The apparatus of Claim 28, further comprising means for enforcing said location identity attribute by allowing access to said digital information only at said specific geographic location.

38. The apparatus of Claim 37, wherein said enforcing means further comprises means for identifying location of an appliance through which access to said digital information is sought.

39. The apparatus of Claim 38, wherein said enforcing means further comprises means for comparing said appliance location to said specific geographic location defined by said location identity attribute, wherein access to said digital information is allowed only if said appliance location falls within said specific geographic location.

40. The apparatus of Claim 38, wherein said location identifying means further comprises means for resolving said appliance location from a street address for said appliance.

41. The apparatus of Claim 38, wherein said location identifying means further comprises means for retrieving said appliance location from a file stored within said appliance.

42. The apparatus of Claim 38, wherein said location identifying means further comprises means for recovering said appliance location from a GPS receiver embedded in said appliance.

43. The apparatus of Claim 38, wherein said location identifying means further comprises means for recovering said appliance location by triangulating RF signals received by said appliance.

44. The apparatus of Claim 28, wherein said memory further stores software instructions operable to cause said processor to encrypt said digital information using an encryption key based at least in part on said location identity attribute.

45. The apparatus of Claim 44, further comprising an area parameter defining a region that encompasses said specific geographic location, and said memory further stores software instructions operable to cause said processor to deterministically combine said area parameter with said location identity attribute to yield said encryption key.

46. The apparatus of Claim 44, further comprising means for enforcing said location identity attribute by allowing decryption of said digital information only at said specific geographic location.

47. The apparatus of Claim 46, wherein said enforcing means further comprises means for generating a decryption key based at least in part on said specific geographic location, said decryption key being thereby used to decrypt said digital information.

48. The apparatus of Claim 28, wherein said location identity attribute is integrated with said digital information.

49. The apparatus of Claim 48, wherein said location identity attribute is included in a portion of a file containing said digital information.

50. The apparatus of Claim 49, further comprising means for enforcing said location identity attribute by allowing access to said file by a corresponding software application only at said specific geographic location.

51. The apparatus of Claim 28, further comprising means for enforcing said location identity attribute by allowing retrieval of said digital information from memory only at said specific geographic location.

52. The apparatus of Claim 28, further comprising means for enforcing said location identity attribute by allowing visual display of said digital information only at said specific geographic location.

53. The apparatus of Claim 28, wherein said digital information and said location identity attribute are disposed in a fixed format including one of CD-ROM, DVD, diskette, videocassette, and tape.

54. The apparatus of Claim 28, wherein said digital information and said location identity attribute are transmitted in electronic form via one of telephone line, video cable, satellite broadcast, fiber optic, and wireless.